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A NEW SPECIES OF TITTMANNIA (BRUNIACEAE)

E. Powrie

(*Bolus Herbarium, University of Cape Town*)

Tittmannia esterhuyseniae Powrie sp. nov.

Frutex erectus, ramosissimus e basi, circiter 50 cm altus, habitu Audouiniae. *Folia* acicularia, spiraliter inserta, ascendentia, dense imbricata, 5—6 mm longa, trigona, minute pubescentes. *Flores* racemosi, subterminales, 5—6 mm longi, albi, bracteis sepalisque eburneis, breviter pedicellati; 9—10 bracteae ad 2 mm longae, margine ciliatae, apice nigro; receptaculum verrucosum glabrum. *Petala* anguste elliptica, 4 mm longa, apice patula supra sepala imbricata, basi minute bicristata. *Stamina* inclusa, antheris lanceolatis. *Ovarium* semi-inferum, biloculárum, loculis biovulatis, apice porcatum glabrum viride; stylus duplicatus sed omnino connatus, 2 mm longus.

An erect shrub, usually about 50 cm high, with numerous ascending branches arising from a woody base and coppicing after fire, with a similar habit of growth to *Audouinia capitata* (L.) Brogniart. Branches densely clothed in spirally inserted leaves, becoming woody towards the base with dark brown bark covered in leaf scars. *Leaves* 5—6 mm long, ascending, imbricate, slightly incurved, linear-lanceolate, trigonal, scabrid with minute hairs along the margins at first, becoming glabrous, sessile, with minute pale deciduous stipules and a dark apical mucro. *Flowers* axillary in dense subterminal racemes usually 20 mm long, but occasionally up to 50 mm long. Buds of the next season's flowering already present at the tips of the branches at the time of flowering. Flowers 5—6 mm long, shortly pedicellate, surrounded by 9—10 creamy-yellow, lanceolate, scaphoid bracts, 1·5—2 mm long, fringed with small hairs and with an apical dark mucro. *Sepals* 3 mm long, lanceolate, scaphoid, creamy-yellow with a dark apex and a few small hairs along the apical margin. *Receptacle* warty and glabrous. Petals 4 mm long, white, narrowly ovate, with two diminutive keels at the base and curving outwards at the apex over the imbricate sepals. *Stamens* 3·5 mm long, included, with lanceolate anthers 0·75 mm long on stout filaments. *Ovary* almost completely inferior, bilocular with 2 ovules in each locule, the apex of the ovary being ridged, glabrous and bright green. Style double but completely connate to the apical stigma. *Fruit* (immature and

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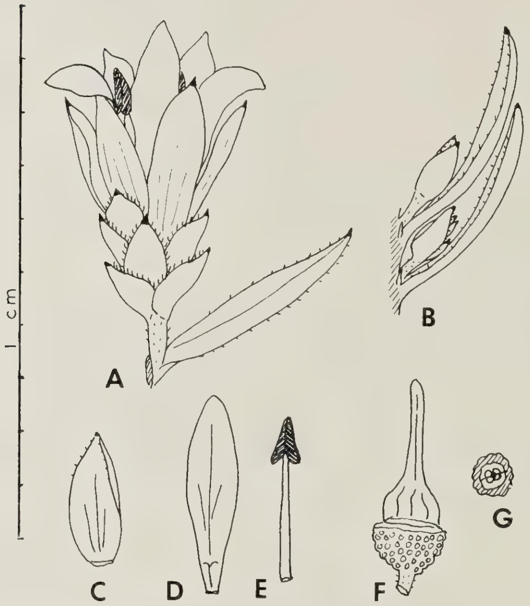

Tittmannia esterhuyseniae sp. nov.
A: flower in axil of leaf. B: upper leaves showing pale stipules and buds. C: sepal. D: petal. E: stamen. F: ovary. G: section through ovary to show ovules on septum.

infertile) ovoid, warty, apparently indehiscent, imbricated by the persistent bracts and crowned by the old floral parts. Large numbers of fruits were examined but no fertile seed was found, only a spongy proliferation of the septum such as is usual in unfertilised fruits of the Bruniaceae.

Habitat: on South-facing slopes in shale soil and Table Mountain Sandstone detritus just below the TMS krantzes near the nek between Kaaiman's Gat and Stettyn's kloof: altitude about 3,000 ft. Also on the outer Sanddrift peaks in the Hex River Mountains.

This species appears to be most closely allied to *Tittmannia laxa* (Thunberg) Presl from which it can be distinguished by its larger and more numerous creamy-yellow bracts and narrowly ovate petals.

I have pleasure in naming this plant for Miss Esterhuysen whose extensive high altitude collecting has cast much light on the genus *Tittmannia* as a whole. She first discovered it in fruit on the outer Sanddrift Peaks in October 1962, and later discovered the second locality in Kaaiman's Gat in December 1967, when the plant was again in fruit. A joint attempt to collect it in the spring of 1968 found it once more in fruit, this time less mature. We therefore concluded that it must be an autumn flowering species and Miss Esterhuysen succeeded in collecting good flowering material in the following March.

Distribution: 3319 (Worcester): Outer Sanddrift Peaks, Hex River Mountains (–BC): *Esterhuysen 31832* (BOL): Kaaiman's Gat (–CD): *Esterhuysen 29771* (BOL): and *Esterhuysen 32177* (Holotype BOL).